University of Lethbridge News Release

For Immediate Release — Friday, May 29, 2015

Canada Foundation for Innovation investment to support creation of cutting-edge cellular imaging research centre

The University of Lethbridge will embark on the creation of a new interdisciplinary research facility that promises to be Canada's leading cellular imaging research centre thanks to a $2 million investment from the Government of Canada's Canada Foundation for Innovation.

Today, the Honourable Ed Holder, Minister of State (Science and Technology), announced more than $333 million for new research infrastructure that Canadian researchers will use to advance Canadian knowledge in areas ranging from mood disorders and robotics to food security and the search for new planets.

At the University of Lethbridge, the $2,098,277 investment towards Dynamic Brain Mapping: Cell signaling to systems function, will create the Cell Signaling Interdisciplinary Research Centre (CSIRC), a facility that will bring together researchers from neuroscience, biochemistry and biological sciences.

"We plan to create Canada's leading cellular imaging research centre to make fundamental discoveries on how dynamic regulation of brain and other systems activity determines risk for important diseases," says lead investigator Dr. Robert Sutherland, Board of Governors Research Chair in Neuroscience. "These discoveries will provide new, key targets for developing prevention and therapy strategies."

Sutherland, who will work closely with fellow neuroscientists Drs. Aaron Gruber, Andrew Iwaniuk, Bryan Kolb, Robert McDonald, Bruce McNaughton, Gerlinde Metz and Majid Mohajerani as well as Drs. Olga Kovalchuk (biological sciences) and HJ Wieden (biochemistry), explains how the new facility will extend the scope of researchers who are currently studying basic processes regulating brain health, degenerative disorders, infective agents and cancer.

"Gene expression and epigenetics play a key role in answering how cells learn, how they process, store and distribute information acquired during development," he says. "CSIRC will enable us to make new discoveries in gene expression, epigenetics and therapeutics in cancer, dementia, developmental brain disorders, stroke and infections."

Dr. Lesley Brown, the University's Interim Vice-President (Research), says the CFI investment recognizes the research expertise present at the U of L.

"Our researchers are respected as leaders in their field and the work they do is of great relevance to important areas of public concern such as health care," says Brown. "This investment from the federal government is an endorsement of the world-class research being conducted here on campus."

Nearly all of the infrastructure will enable the users of the CSIRC group to conduct brain-imaging projects with viral vectors and genetically modified rodents. It will allow the group to move forward their activities, such as health-related research, training and partnering with non-academic collaborators, to that of a world leader.

"Today's announcement will strengthen Canada's reputation in science and technology by supporting research infrastructure that will attract world-class talent, train a new generation of students and make discoveries that benefit Canadians in remarkable ways," says Holder.

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